

MEDIA PACKAGE AND PRESS CONFERENCE

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PARTICIPANTS

The cooperative efforts of Club FED and the State of California mark an historic effort toward implementing a realistic strategy for managing the state's water resources.

Today's announcement represents an integration of federal and state actions to comply with environmental regulations regarding the Bay/Delta and to address California's long-term Delta water needs. The cooperative agreement between the four federal agencies and the State of California outlines a plan to develop both interim and long-term solutions to water management challenges. Beginning in 1995, responsibility for California's water resources will begin to shift from the federal government to the state. This will provide California with greater flexibility in meeting water needs across the state. It will also provide significant cost savings for both the state and federal governments.

These federal and state agencies will continue to develop realistic, fair and creative solutions to California's persistent water supply problems.

Federal Agencies

Bureau of Reclamation — This Department of the Interior agency operates federal water projects in the 17 western states including the Central Valley Project in California. It shares with the Fish and Wildlife Service responsibility for implementing the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA).

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency — The EPA enforces federal laws that protect public health and the environment. It oversees state compliance with the Clean Water Act.

Fish and Wildlife Service — This Department of the Interior agency conserves, protects, and enhances fish and wildlife throughout the United States. It shares responsibility with the National Marine Fisheries Service for issuing biological opinions in accordance with the Endangered Species Act. The agency is also responsible, with the Bureau of Reclamation, for implementing the CVPIA.

National Marine Fisheries Service — This Department of Commerce agency protects anadromous (migratory) fish species in accordance with the Endangered Species Act.

State of California

California Resources Agency — This office oversees 16 state entities, including the Departments of Water Resources and Fish and Game. The Secretary for Resources chairs the Governor's Water Policy Council.

California Environmental Protection Agency — This office oversees six state entities, including the State Water Resources Control Board.

Department of Water Resources — This agency manages state water supplies, statewide water resources planning and operation of the State Water Project.

State Water Resources Control Board — This five-member board appointed by the governor allocates surface water rights for California and regulates, with nine regional boards, state water quality.

Department of Fish and Game — This agency protects and conserves the state's fish, plants and wildlife for their ecological, educational and economic value.





BENEFITS

This coordinated action provides many benefits for California's environment and economy and begins a new era of integrated water resource management.

Integrating the actions of individual regulatory agencies eliminates the conflicts and overlap that lead to continual changes in water requirements. This certainty of water supply allows more effective water resource planning and helps both agricultural and urban businesses to develop appropriate strategies for economic success.

INTEGRATED AGENCY ACTIONS

Since July 1994, state and federal agencies have worked together to develop a uniform approach to implementing federal environmental requirements for the Bay/Delta Estuary. These agencies include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the California Resources Agency, the Departments of Water Resources and Fish and Game, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the State Water Resources Control Board. These efforts are designed to meet the needs of the Bay/Delta while providing every available drop to agricultural and urban water users. This integrated effort will benefit the environment, the state economy, and California residents.

ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT AND SPECIES PROTECTION

In recent decades, there has been a significant decline in Bay/Delta water quality, ecosystem health, and fish and wildlife populations. To reverse this decline, these agencies are jointly implementing the requirements of the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, and other statutes. Key to this effort is a shift from protecting individual species to improving long-term conditions in the entire ecosystem. This "big picture" approach will protect all Bay/Delta species while avoiding unexpected changes that occur when requirements are intermittently announced for individual species.

- Delta Smelt
- Winter Run Chinook Salmon
- Central Valley Project Improvement Act
- Water Quality Standards

CERTAINTY FOR WATER PLANNING

When environmental requirements are not coordinated, water users face an uncertain supply from year to year. This joint action provides water users with a consistent prediction of all Delta water needs. Greater certainty of water supply allows more appropriate community and industry planning and fosters a more stable economic future for California.

FLEXIBILITY TO MINIMIZE IMPACTS

While the environmental water requirements determined by the agencies are firm, the cooperative plan provides flexibility in meeting them. Basing water needs on monthly hydrologies and a "sliding scale" approach to water year type allows better operational response to existing conditions. These refinements have lowered by almost one-quarter the amount of water required in drought years for environmental needs.

STATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WATER MANAGEMENT

California should manage its own water resources while at the same time complying with federal requirements. This joint action advances a cooperative process to develop state Bay/Delta standards and initiate state water rights proceedings for meeting these requirements.



DECEMBER '94
State/Federal Plan

PUBLIC REVIEW

AGENCY REVIEW

MANAGEMENT APPROVAL



BACKGROUND

The Bay/Delta and California face water supply challenges that require a new approach and long-term solutions.

THE BAY/DELTA ECOSYSTEM

The Bay/Delta Estuary captures 47% of California's water runoff and supports and sustains these resources:

- 40,000 acres of critical wetlands
- Suisun Marsh, the largest remaining brackish marsh in the United States
- significant commercial and recreational fisheries
- 120 fish species
- drinking water for 20 million Californians
- water to irrigate 200 types of crops
- water for 45% of the nation's fruits and vegetables
- water to sustain wildlife refuges in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Bay/Delta: A Vital Resource

The San Francisco Bay/Delta is the largest and most productive estuary on the Pacific Coast. Its watershed drains 40% of California's land area, supports over 120 fish species, and includes the largest brackish marsh in the West. It also provides irrigation water for 45% of the nation's fruits and vegetables and drinking water for 20 million Californians.

The estuary's fisheries have declined steadily from historic levels and populations of many species have been at record low levels in recent years.

The Need for Action

The State Water Resources Control Board has primary responsibility for implementing water quality standards. Under the federal Clean Water Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is required to approve or disapprove these standards.

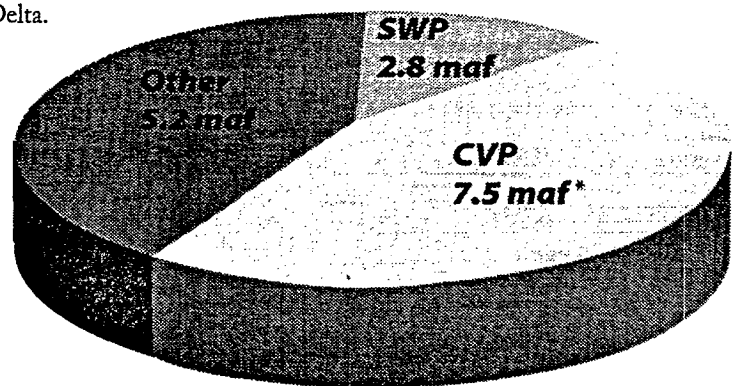
In early 1991, the State of California submitted to U.S. EPA a limited revision of its standards under the Clean Water Act. Portions of these revisions were disapproved by U.S. EPA in September 1991. The state began a new standard setting process but, in April 1993, withdrew its draft, in part due to uncertainty resulting from the Endangered Species Act. Shortly thereafter, environmental groups filed a lawsuit seeking to require prompt U.S. EPA proposal of water quality standards for the Bay/Delta. The agency agreed to do so by December 15, 1993 and later committed to issue final standards by December 15, 1994 as part of the settlement terms of the lawsuit.

Framework for State/Federal Cooperation

In June 1994, the four federal agencies and the State of California signed a framework agreement to coordinate their actions in the estuary through a comprehensive ecosystem-based approach. Under the agreement, the agencies have worked toward adoption of mutually acceptable water quality standards, coordinated implementation of Endangered Species Act requirements, and development of a long-term planning process for water management in California.

The framework agreement envisions that California will issue draft water quality standards by the end of 1994, with final state standards in the spring. The standards can be structured differently as long as they are equally protective. If the state standards are approvable, U.S. EPA would begin the process of withdrawing the federal standards.

Developed Water Supply in Bay/Delta Watershed



* million acre feet



BEYOND 1994

Continued cooperation among various state and federal entities will ensure that the benefits of this historic effort are realized.

February 1995

- State Water Project and Central Valley Project begin interim operations to provide water for environmental needs.

March 1995

- State Water Resources Control Board submits final state water quality standards for the Bay/Delta to U.S. EPA for approval.

June 1995

- State Water Resources Control Board begins review of water rights permits with water supply operations throughout the Bay/Delta watershed.
- If state water quality standards meet Clean Water Act requirements, U.S. EPA accepts the Bay/Delta standards and begins process to withdraw federal standards.

1995

- The federal government and the State of California begin a coordinated process to identify long-term solutions for water resource management. New supply and management options are explored to effectively meet environmental, agricultural and urban water supply needs. Open process includes involvement of various agencies, interest groups and the public.

DECEMBER '94
State/Federal Plan

Interim
Operations
(CVP & SWP)

State Board
Adopts Water
Standards

State Board
Amends
Water Rights

State and Federal
Agencies Develop
Long-Term Solutions

- Reverse Species Decline
- Improve Water Quality
- Increase Certainty of Supplies
- Identify Long-Term Supply Solutions



Coordinated Actions

Action by state and federal agencies on species protection and water quality standards is the first step in solving the state's water supply problems.

Water quality standards for the Bay/Delta and biological opinions for listed species are key elements in improving the health of the estuary's ecosystem. These regulatory actions determine the amount of water necessary to meet environmental needs. Coordinating the regulatory requirements of the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act and other federal legislation eliminates conflicting agency goals and overlapping water needs.

WATER QUALITY STANDARDS

The Clean Water Act requires development of water quality standards to protect natural resources. The U.S. EPA released draft standards in December 1993. The final standards reflect input from scientists, policy makers, environmentalists, water users, interest groups, the public, and state agencies.

The standards are designed to restore those aquatic habitats and ecosystem processes most critical to the survival of a diverse array of resident and migratory fishes. Once implemented, and when combined with regional and statewide watershed protection efforts, the standards will serve as the cornerstone for the recovery of the estuarine ecosystem.

Salinity Criteria

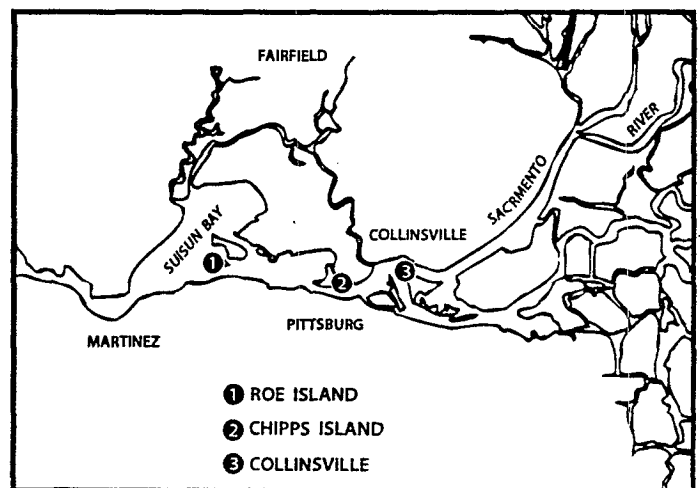
Salt water from San Francisco Bay and fresh water from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers come into a "mixing zone" in the Delta. When this mixing zone moves upstream due to reduced fresh-water flows, fish and other species are confined to the deeper river channels and become vulnerable to entrainment at Delta pumping plants.

To protect the fish nursery area in Suisun Bay, a salinity limit of 2 parts per thousand (ppt) must be maintained from February through June. This standard will be measured at Roe Island, Chipps Island and Collinsville, depending upon the amount of runoff. In wet years, the standard must be met further downstream for longer periods. In drier years, the standard would need to be maintained further upstream and for shorter periods. This approach reflects natural cycles.

STATUS OF BIOLOGICAL OPINIONS

The Fish and Wildlife Service has reached agreement with the California Urban Water Agencies, agricultural and environmental groups, and state and federal agencies on the biological opinion outlining the effects of water project operations on the delta smelt. The opinion will be finalized February 15, 1995. The opinion will contain recommendations on flows through the estuary that will ensure appropriate habitat for delta smelt and adequate transport flows for juvenile fish. The biological opinion on the winter-run chinook salmon remains unchanged from the February 1993 long-term biological opinion.

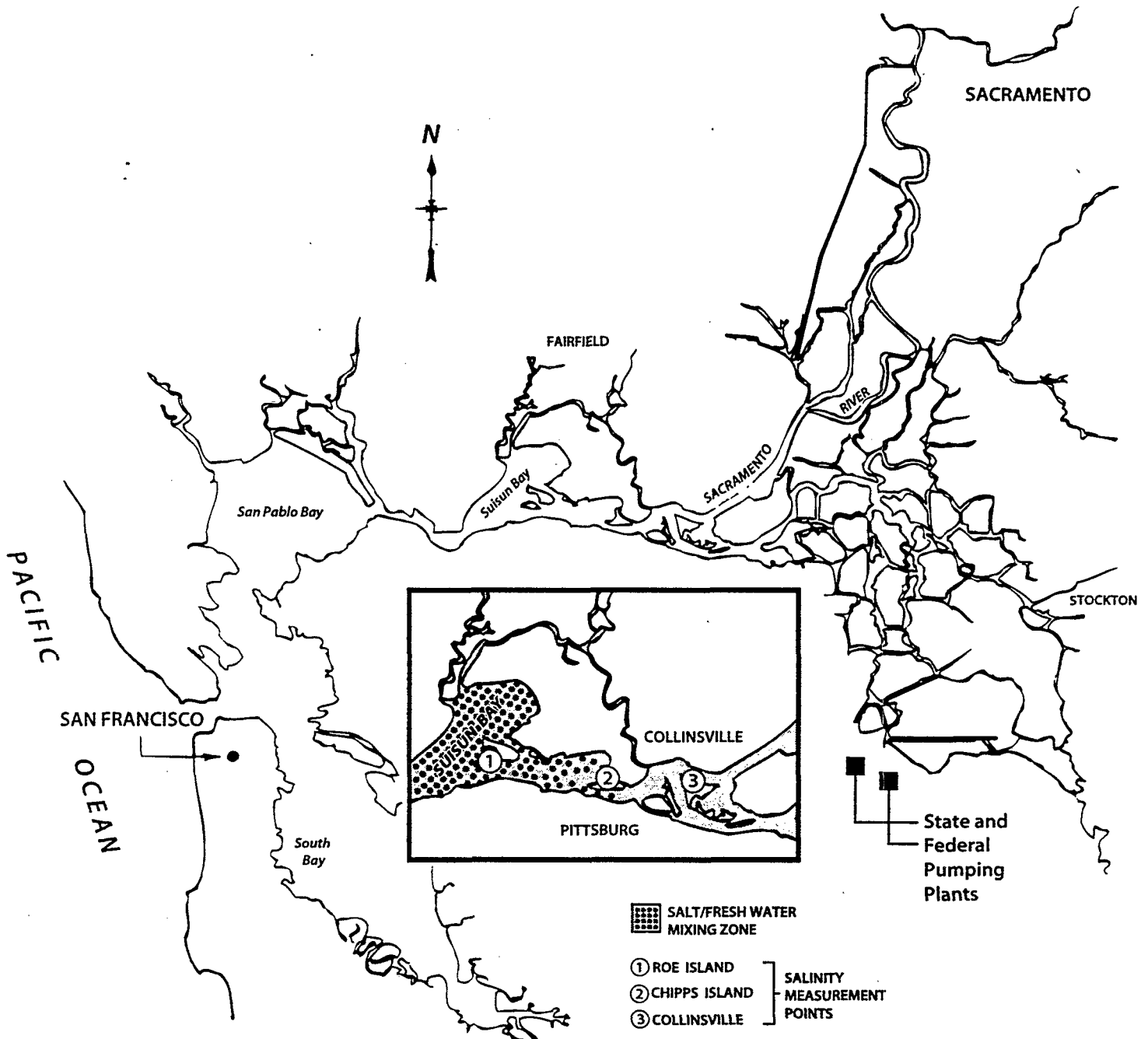
Salinity Standard Measurement Locations



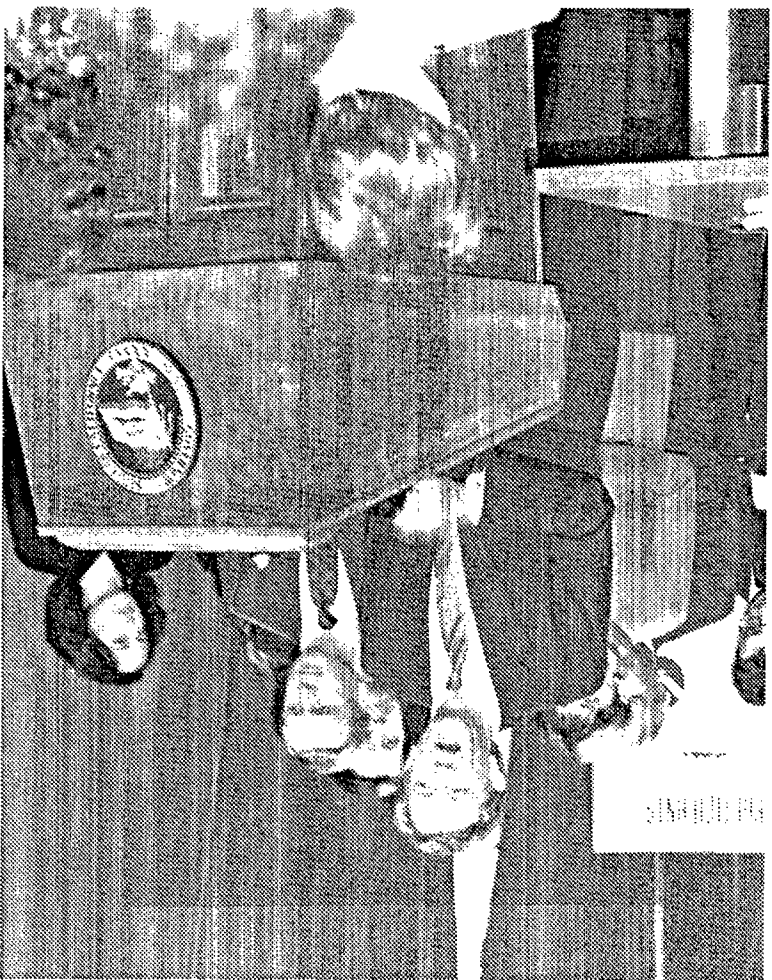


MAP

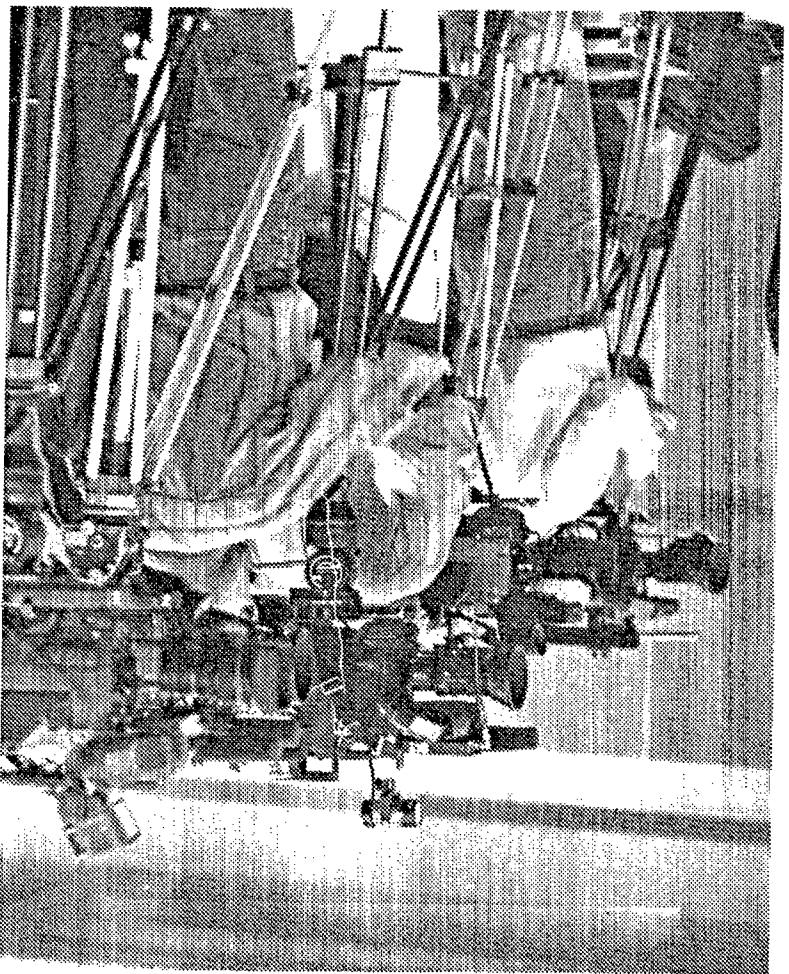
The Bay/Delta Estuary is a vital California resource.



SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN DELTA



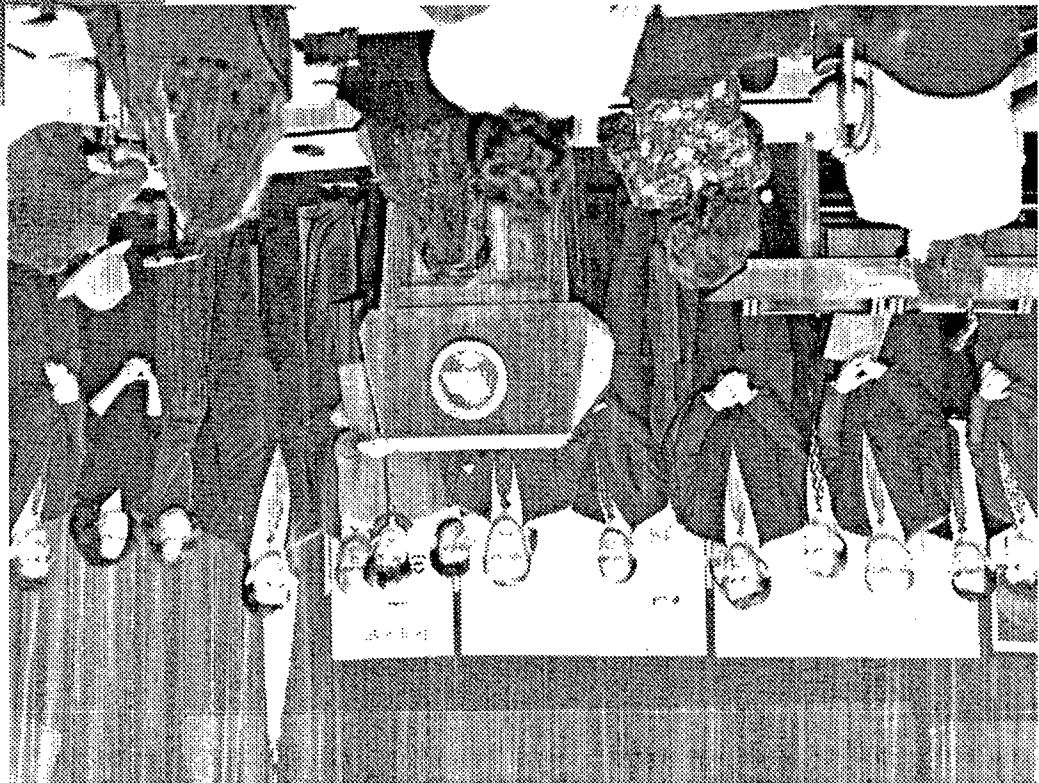
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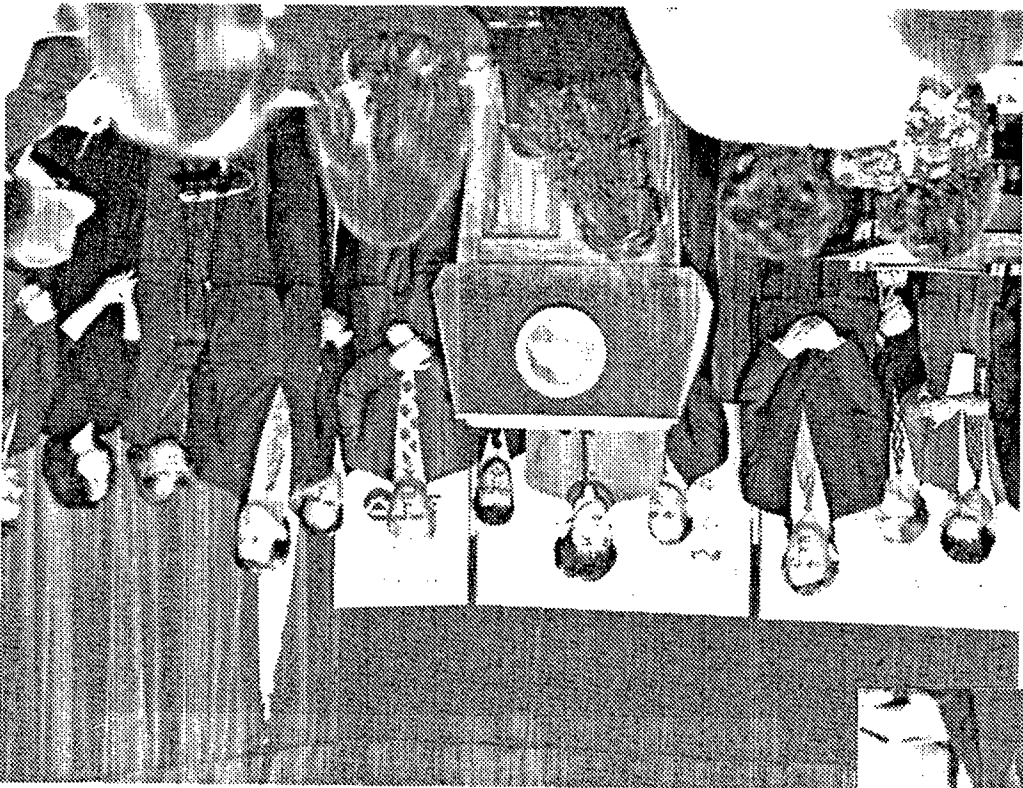
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GOVERNOR PETE WILSON



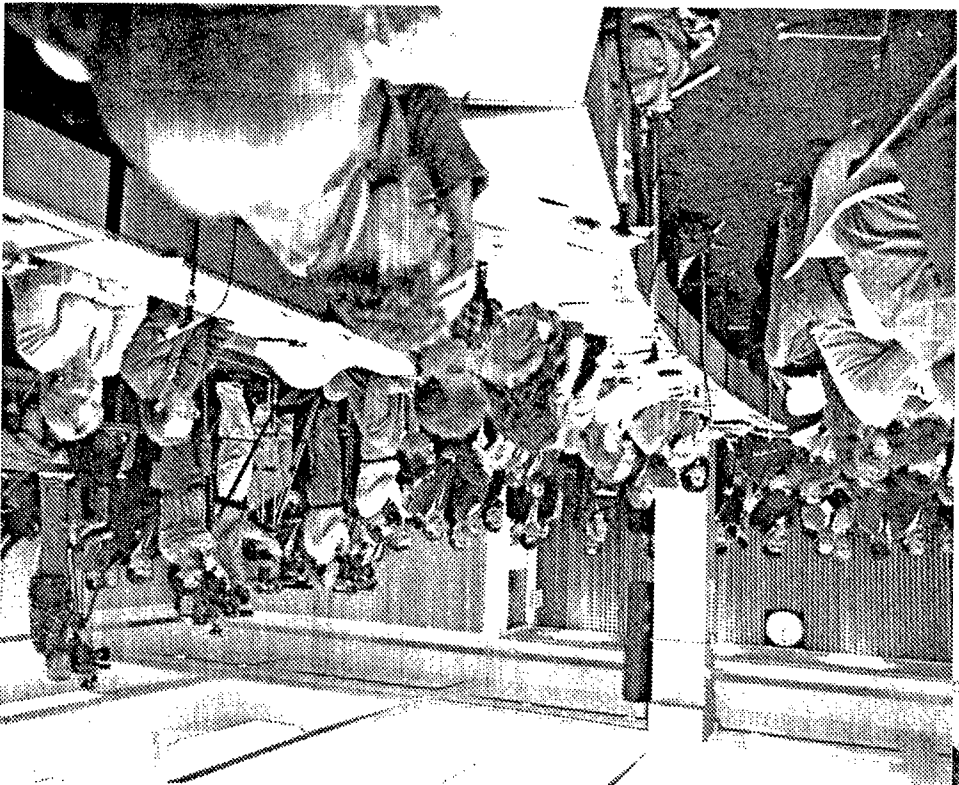
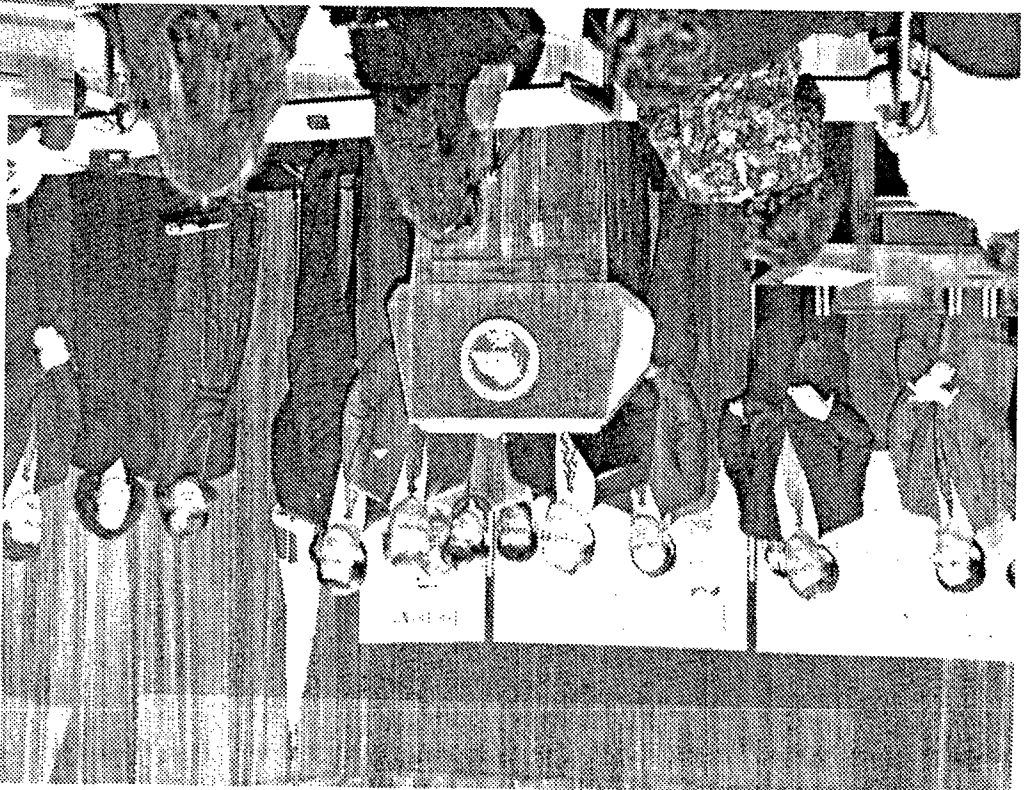
U.S. EPA ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER



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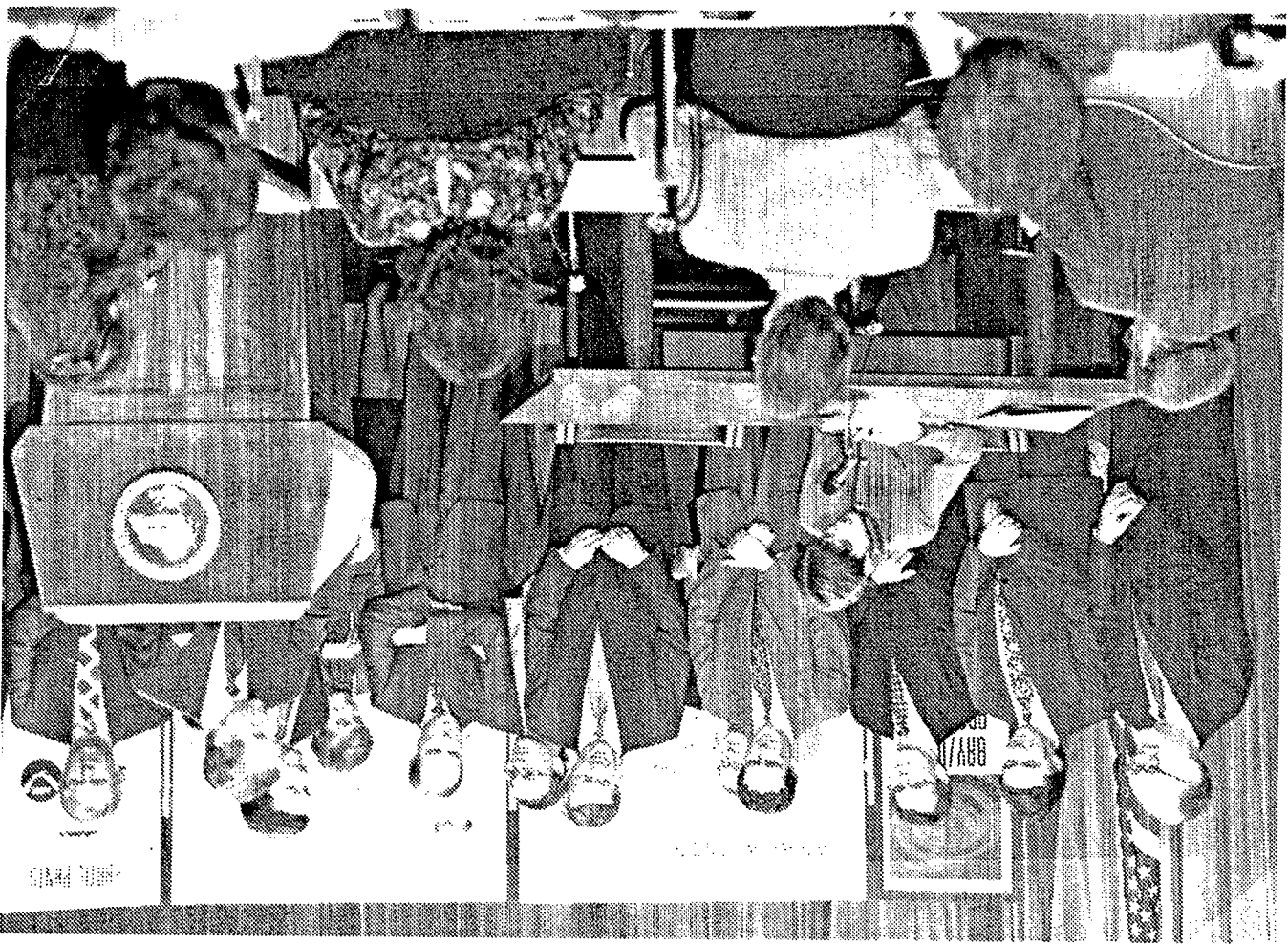
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REGIONAL DIRECTOR PATTERSON



SIGNS AGREEMENT

U.S. EPA ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER



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12-15-94 PRESS CONFERENCE

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